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Pritzker Military Museum & Library Statement on the Resignation of President & CEO Kenneth Clarke and Selection as John Schwan as Interim

CHICAGO, January 29, 2018—Kenneth Clarke, the president and CEO of the Pritzker Military Museum & Library and board member of the Pritzker Military Foundation, announced his plans to resign on February 2, 2018. Museum & Library Board member, John Schwan was selected to serve as the interim president and chief executive officer.

During his time, Mr. Clarke grew the organization into a national leader in the field of military history and affairs through innovative approaches to library and museum services and external programming. Under his direction, the Museum & Library’s collection of books and physical artifacts doubled and greatly expanded the collection’s range of military topics. He was instrumental in the development of a Veterans Information Center that collects and organizes resources available to service members and their families. He led the organization to produce high-quality exhibits on important military topics which have received national and international recognition. He served as producer for hundreds of episodes of the Museum & Library’s television series Pritzker Military Presents and was creator of the Chicago/Midwest Emmy nominated series Citizen Soldier. Mr. Clarke has been a key partner of the United States World War One Centennial Commission and was instrumental in developing the 100 Cities/100 Memorials program to designate 100 memorials across the United States as official WWI Centennial Memorials.

“Ken has played an invaluable role at the Pritzker Military Museum & Library over the last seven years,” said Colonel (IL) Jennifer N. Pritzker, IL ARNG (Retired) founder and chair of the Museum & Library. “His judgement, military knowledge, museum acumen and deep interest in the Museum & Library have benefited the community and our military. He will be missed.”

Mr. Clarke, along with his wife Laura Biddle Clarke, a special projects manager with TAWANI Foundation, will be relocating to Ohio. The Museum & Library Board has begun a national search for Mr. Clarke’s successor. Mr. Clarke will stay on as a consultant during the transition.

Mr. Clarke said: “It has been an enormous privilege to have led the Pritzker Military Museum & Library during an important and significant period of growth and transition. I am proud of the work we have accomplished and grateful to have worked with remarkable colleagues who are so committed to advancing the knowledge about our military history throughout the world. I’m confident the team will work together to help advance the mission of the library and continue on their relentless pursuit of excellence.”

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Schwan, who is currently chairman of CTI Industries and a board member of the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, will continue to serve in that capacity while he serves as interim president and CEO Pritzker Military Museum & Library.

“We are thrilled that John has agreed to serve during this transitional capacity at such a critical time for the Museum & Library. He is a highly effective, accomplished leader with a proven track record of delivering strong results,” said Colonel Pritzker. “John has deep knowledge and appreciation of military history and affairs. Most importantly, he understands our mission and has a clear passion for developing inventive programs, creative audience-building strategies and a vision for moving the museum forward as we enter the next phase of our growth.”

As chairman of CTI Industries, Schwan oversaw the company’s IPO and played a key role in its expansion into Europe and Latin America, and growth into the medical services and food packaging industries. Schwan is an investor in a variety of business startups, including Old Smokehouse, Inc., JHSWW LLC, USA Athletic Club, and Everede Tool Productions.

Schwan is a patron of the Schwan Lecture Series at North Park University. He is a principal benefactor and adviser of Operation Support our Troops USA, an active sponsor of Chicago 502 and a past post commander of the American Legion Post at the Union League Club of Chicago.

Schwan is a veteran of Vietnam (1966-1969) where he served with the First Air Cavalry and attended OCS at Fort Benning. He was awarded the Combat Infantry Badge, Air Medal, two Bronze Stars with V for Valor device, and a Purple Heart. Schwan is active in the Sheridan First Cavalry Chapter and is involved in several other veteran-related organizations in the Midwest. He also actively recruits veterans for employment opportunities, supports Chicagoland ROTC programs and organizations that locally help families of veterans. He is a founding member of Chicagoland Veteran’s Exchange.

About the Pritzker Military Museum & Library
Founded in 2003, the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, located in downtown Chicago, is a nonprofit center where citizens and soldiers come together to learn about military history and affairs. The Museum & Library features an extensive collection of books, programs, artifacts, and rotating exhibits covering many eras and branches of the military. Programs include a lending library, the archives, recorded TV shows, podcasts and oral histories, and museum exhibits. To learn more about the Pritzker Military Museum & Library, visit www.pritzkermilitary.org or @PritzkerMilitaryLibrary on Facebook.